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DE RUEHCO #0067 0351713
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041713Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1308
INFO RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1565

UNCLAS COTONOU 000067

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PD, AF/W, PD/IIP, ECA/A/L/W
PARIS FOR ARS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [BN](#)

SUBJECT: BENIN OUTREACH PROGRAM: WORKSHOP ON ETHICS AND
TRANSPARENCY IN JOURNALISM

11. SUMMARY: On January 29, PAS Cotonou hosted a well-attended training workshop for twenty Beninese reporters sharpen their professional skills by exchanging ideas and sharing experiences with senior counterparts in the profession. END SUMMARY.

12. DATE OF ACTIVITY: January 29, 2009; second quarter, FY 10.

13. PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION/OBJECTIVES: Post held this event to meet the MSP goal of improving Press freedom in Benin by organizing training seminars for local reporters. Most Beninese journalists are young university graduates without formal journalism training. Based on requests made by directors and owners of media outlets, this event promoted journalism as a tool to enhance freedom of speech and to strengthen democracy.

14. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: This seminar was first in a series of training programs by the Public Affairs Section to promote the professional development of local journalists.

15. Ambassador Knight launched the training session led by Georges Amlon, a senior Beninese journalist, assisted by Patrice Louis, a senior French journalist based in Cotonou. In her opening remarks, PAO Watson noted that democracy is strengthened through a free and professional media, and the U.S. Mission will do all it can to support media development in Benin. Ambassador Knight emphasized the role played by the Public Affairs Section in achieving this goal. Ambassador Knight emphasized the role of journalists for the promotion of development and strengthening of democracy, and is particularly important during leading up to the February 2011 Presidential and legislative elections in Benin.

16. MPP UMBRELLA THEMES AND AUDIENCE REACHED:

-- Building Democratic Institutions
-- Supporting a Responsible and Independent Media

The workshop attracted 20 journalists from 20 print and broadcast media outlets. The workshop received good coverage, including several newspaper articles and TV and radio news segments on public station ORTB TV, private Golfe TV and Golfe FM radio, with translation in major Beninese local languages. Broadcast coverage reached an estimated 2.5 million viewers/listeners.

17. RESULT/IMPACT: Excellent. The participants were particularly satisfied with the content of the program and the quality of the presentation. and thanked the U.S. Embassy for taking this initiative which they hope will be repeated.

18. NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN KIND SUPPORT: None.

19. QUALITY OF USG SUPPORT: Excellent. The participation of Ambassador Knight enhanced the success of this event. Kudos to PAS for recruiting such highly experienced journalists to run this workshop. At the end of the seminar, each participant received copies of Nouveaux Horizons books 'Pratique du Journalisme' and 'Une Presse Libre'.

Knight